

BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

For Fiscal Year 2022

Primary Applicant (Name and Address): 24-7 Telcom, Inc. E4528 County Road C PO Box 247 Downsville, Wisconsin 54735	Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx . Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions. Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: March 17, 2022 at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. Late applications will not be accepted.	
Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov		
Date: March 16, 2022		
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>		
<p>Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>		
Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print) Mark Stenseth	Title CEO	Phone () (715) 231-2000
Signature of Authorized Representative 	Date 3/16/2022	

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name 24-7 Telcom, Inc.	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$193,248.00		
Federal Employer Identification No. 39-1631262	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$772,992.00		
Contact Name and Title Mark Stenseth CEO	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$966,240.00		
Telephone Number (715) 231-2000	Project Name Town of Union FTTH Project		
E-mail Address(es) stenseth@wwt.coop	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) FTTH		
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant N/A	Grant Manager Federal Employer Identification No. N/A		
Grant Manager Contact Name N/A	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number N/A		
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Town of Union Eau Claire County 1506 N. Townhall Rd. Eau Claire, WI 54703 FEIN # 39-1094390 </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Eau Claire County 721 Oxford Ave. Eau Claire, WI 54703 FEIN # 39-6005694 </td> </tr> </table>		Town of Union Eau Claire County 1506 N. Townhall Rd. Eau Claire, WI 54703 FEIN # 39-1094390	Eau Claire County 721 Oxford Ave. Eau Claire, WI 54703 FEIN # 39-6005694
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Brief Project Description The Town of Union FTTH Project will provide Fiber to the Home Broadband access using GPON technology to approximately 7 Business and 98 Residential locations in the Town of Union. This project will cover 3.6 square miles and serve the remaining unserved area within the Town of Union.			
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 1Gbps	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 1Gbps		
Minimum Proposed Download Speed Available To Purchase 300Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed Available To Purchase 300Mbps		
County or Counties served by this project Eau Claire	Community or Communities served by this project Town of Union		
List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve In the unserved area of this Project there are no broadband service providers providing 5Mbps/.6Mbps. See Section 3.2.2.a of the Application Table 1 provides a summary of the broadband providers in the underserved area of this Project.			

<p>Does proposed project serve an <u>unserved</u> area of the State, as defined in <u>Section 1.4</u> of the application instruction? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Community</u></th> <th><u>Telecommuter</u></th> <th><u>Broadband</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Town of Union</td> <td>No</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eau Claire County</td> <td>No</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Community</u>	<u>Telecommuter</u>	<u>Broadband</u>	Town of Union	No	No	Eau Claire County	No	Yes
<u>Community</u>	<u>Telecommuter</u>	<u>Broadband</u>								
Town of Union	No	No								
Eau Claire County	No	Yes								
<p>For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access).</p> <p>7</p>	<p>For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access).</p> <p>133</p>									
<p>Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i>?</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i>?</p> <p>34</p>									
<p>For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>									
<p>Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>									
<p>Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021 (yes/no) Yes</p>										

Summary of Project Budget And Income Summary

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application Budget & Income Summary



Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

Grant Summary

Grant Applicant:	Project:
24-7 TELCOM, INC.	Town of Union FTTH Project

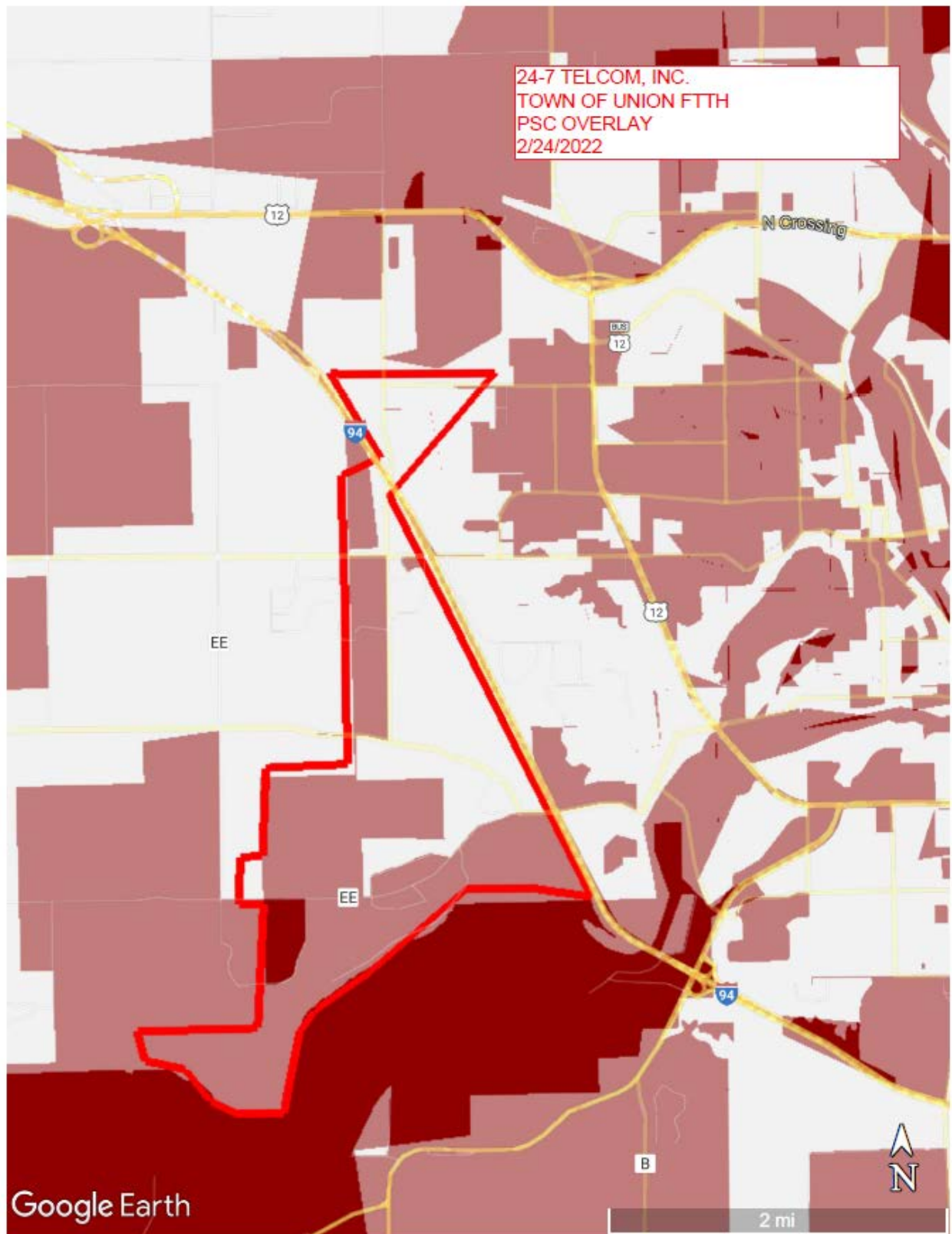
Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 90,328.00	\$ 670,072.00	\$ 760,400.00
2	Equipment	\$ 46,400.00	\$ 46,400.00	\$ 92,800.00
3	Supplies			\$ -
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)	\$ 56,520.00	\$ 56,520.00	\$ 113,040.00
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees			\$ -
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other			\$ -
Total:		\$ 193,248.00	\$ 772,992.00	\$ 966,240.00
				80.0% match requested

Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	24-7 Telcom, Inc	Applicant	Cash	\$ 224,992.00
2	Eau Claire County	Partner	Cash	\$ 274,000.00
3	Town of Union	Partner	Cash	\$ 274,000.00
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 772,992.00

Map #1 Wisconsin Broadband Map – Town of Union FTTH Project



Map #2 Detail Map of Project Area – Town of Union FTTH Project

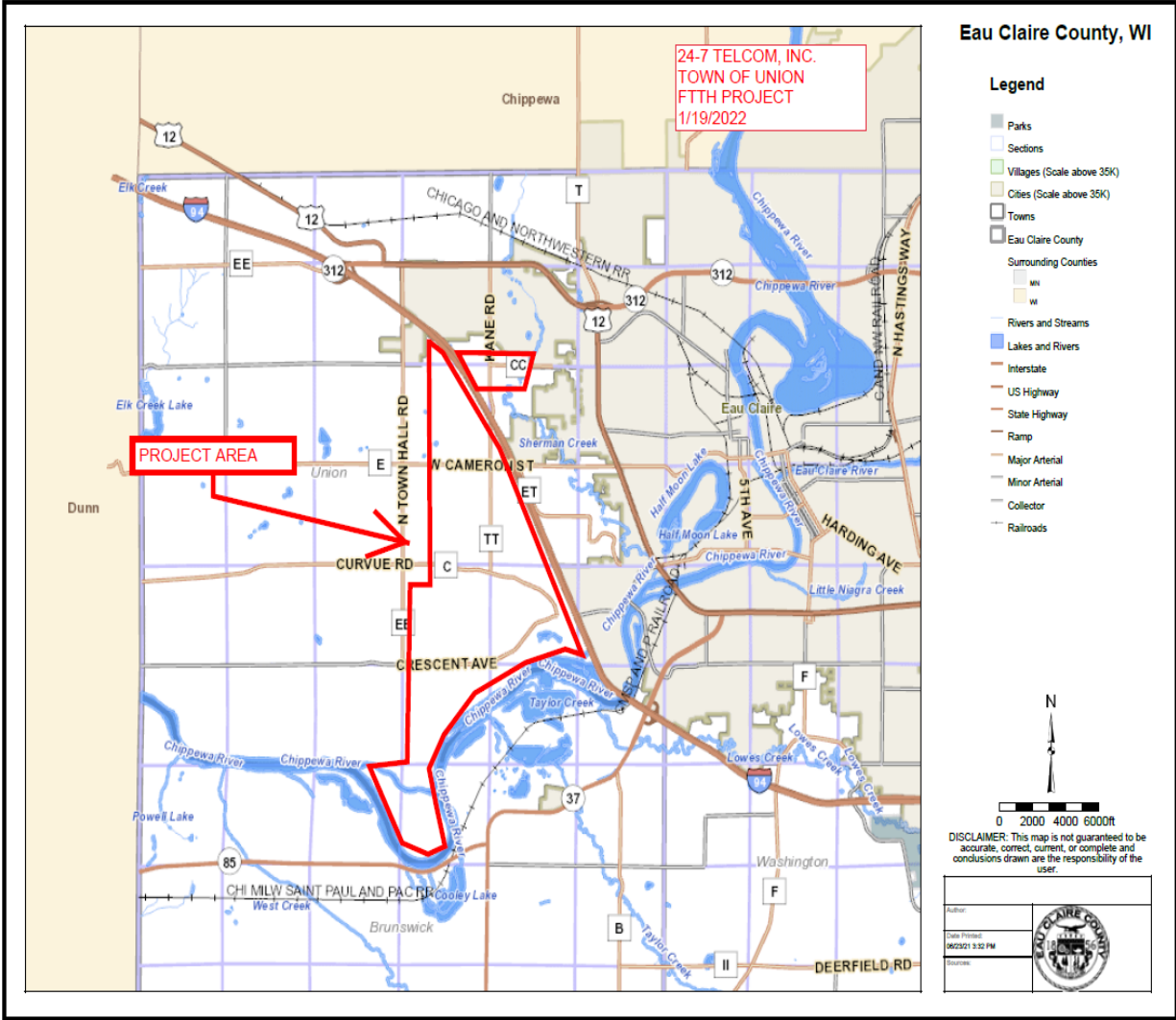


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Table 4	Summary of Broadband Survey
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B	Public Private Partnership Agreement – Town of Union

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

24-7 Telcom, Inc. (“Telcom”) is a Wisconsin corporation certified by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (“Commission”) as an Alternative Telecommunications Utility to provide telecommunications service in Wisconsin. Telcom is a 100% owned affiliate of West Wisconsin Telcom Cooperative, Inc. (“WWTC”) also a Wisconsin corporation certified by the Commission as an Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (“ILEC”) to provide telecommunications service in Wisconsin.

WWTC has been providing telecommunications service in its designated ILEC territory since 1954.

WWTC provides broadband and Internet access using a 100% fiber network. In 2006 WWTC began a project to provide Fiber-To-The-Home throughout its ILEC service territory. This project, which was completed in 2009, made broadband speeds of 25 Mbps down/3 Mbps up and higher available to all business and residents in the ILEC service area. Broadband speeds of up to 1 Gbps are now available throughout the ILEC service territory.

Telcom currently provides high speed broadband and Internet access using a combination of fiber and copper plant facilities in the Menomonie, Wisconsin area. Telcom has been providing service in Menomonie since November, 1999.

The Town of Union FTTH Project will provide Fiber to the Home Broadband access using GPON technology to approximately 7 Business and 98 Residential locations in the Town of Union (“Town”). This project will cover 3.6 square miles and serve the remaining unserved/underserved area within the Town of Union (“Project”). The Project is Scalable and would provide Telcom a pathway to service many more homes in unserved and underserved areas in the future. The Project will start at a new Fiber Optic Splitter Cabinet to be placed along CTH EE. This cabinet will be installed during the project and is intended to provide service to an unserved area and it’s expected to be an area for future growth due its proximity to the City of Eau Claire. The Project will leverage existing transport facilities.

Telcom partnered with the Town to provide access to Fiber-to-the-Home Broadband service for up to 140 locations. A survey of the Project area does show there is interest for Telcom to serve this Project area. See Table 4 Summary of Broadband Survey. The Town has partnered with Telcom and will contribute \$274,000.00 towards the Project, see Exhibit B Public Private Partnership Agreement – Town of Union. Eau Claire County has also partnered with Telcom and will contribute \$274,000.00 towards this Project, see Exhibit A – Letters of Support. If Telcom is awarded this grant, it will complete the Project by December 31, 2023 and the Town of Union will have Broadband service of at least 25Mbps/3Mbps available to 100% of the locations within the Town.

The Commission Broadband Coverage map does show that this area is served by four of the large mobile wireless providers. However, none of the mobile wireless providers consistently provide broadband service to these customers. The unserved area is not served with broadband service by the incumbent telephone provider, Ameritech d/b/a AT&T-Wisconsin (“AT&T”). T-Mobile Fixed Wireless service of 25Mbps/3Mbps is offered in the underserved areas, but is not reliable and does not always deliver consistent advertised speeds (see Table 4 Summary of Broadband Survey).

The Commission Broadband Coverage Map does show this area as a Broadband Expansion Grant eligible area. We are unaware of any plans to provide wireline facility based broadband service to the Project area by any provider by December 31, 2024.

Telcom has received many calls from residents in this area and currently has a list of customers asking for broadband service. This list can be made available upon request. This Project would initially provide access to a Fiber to the Home network for over 140 locations in the grant application area. The Project would also provide a pathway to service many more homes in this area in the

future. The Project will be costly to construct and the unserved and underserved area may never be served without a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant.

The Town has a very good relationship with Telcom. Many residents and businesses have complained to the Town officials for years about the lack of available broadband services in the project area. The Town has contacted Telcom and has asked Telcom to provide service to this portion of their Town.

FTTH is the perfect solution for this service area as it has upside potential for broadband speeds which is almost unlimited. Telcom would install technology called Gigabit Passive Optical Network ("GPON") which not only provides high speed broadband for Internet access, but also could provide digital IP based voice and video services. Telcom would provide any speeds requested, but typical broadband speeds with Internet access chosen by customers are:

Mbps Service Down/Up

300/300 - \$79.95

600/600 - \$99.95

1 GB/1 GB - \$149.95

With no data caps when bundled.

Telcom believes this project is exactly what the Wisconsin legislature had in mind when this program was developed and emphasized service to unserved areas as a key factor when awarding a grant.

This Project helps accomplish the goal of the Wisconsin Broadband Plan - 2019 which states "The Broadband Plan's overarching goal is for every Wisconsinite to have affordable access to broadband service, if they so choose, by January 1, 2025." The Broadband Plan is based on investments in Broadband as outlined in the 2019 – 2021 and 2022 - 2023 biannual budgets. Along with the Governor's proposed speed goal of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up for all Wisconsin homes and businesses.

Without a Broadband Grant this unserved and underserved area may never get Broadband service as provided in the Wisconsin Broadband Plan - 2019.

Telcom is requesting funding from the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program to expand broadband service to this unserved and underserved Project area. The amount being requested is \$193,248.00 which is 20% of the construction cost at the location.

Telcom staff will work with the Commission staff to provide maps of this Project in an electronic format.

In 2016 Telcom applied for and was awarded a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant in the amount of \$67,500 for the Town of Red Cedar, Wisconsin. This Project was completed by Telcom in April, 2017. The Town of Red Cedar, Dunn County Economic Development and Telcom acknowledge this Rusk Project as very successful with higher counts of customers requesting Telcom's Broadband service than originally expected. Over 43 locations now have access to a FTTH network.

In 2017 Telcom applied for and was awarded a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant FY 2018 Round 1 in the amount of \$153,000 for the Town of Menomonie project. This project was completed by Telcom in May, 2019. Over 120 locations now have access to a FTTH network.

In 2018 Telcom applied for and was awarded two Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grants in FY 2018 Round #2 in the amounts of \$120,000 for the Town of Weston project and \$70,000 for the

Town of Rock Creek - Caryville project. These two Projects were completed in November, 2019 and will provide a FTTH network to an additional 75 locations.

In 2019 Telcom applied for and was awarded three Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grants in FY 2020 in the amounts of \$680,000 for the Town of Sherman Project, \$273,300 for the County Road J and Solar Farm Project and \$79,500 for the Town of Wheaton Project. These three FTTH Projects were completed in 2021.

In 2020 Telcom applied for six Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grants in FY 2021. Telcom received five Grants in the amounts of \$709,700 for the Town of Drammen FTTH Project, \$467,250 for the Town of Red Cedar 610th FTTH Project, \$335,160 for the Town of Menomonie Irvington West Project, \$320,300 for the Town of Menomonie CTH BB FTTH Project, and \$105,725 for the Town of Brunswick CTH Z FTTH Project. These five FTTH Projects will be completed by early 2022. The Town of Weston CTH D FTTH Project in the amount of \$351,300 was not awarded, but was re-submitted in the Wisconsin ARPA Broadband Access Grant round in FY 2022.

In 2021 Telcom applied for 12 Wisconsin ARPA Broadband Access Grants in FY 2022. Telcom received eleven Grants in the amounts of \$1,506,790 for the Town of Stanton, \$1,479,140 for the Town of Red Cedar, \$1,438,035 for the Town of Tainter, \$1,421,630 for the Town of Wheaton, \$1,383,320 for the Town of Elk Mound, \$1,069,815 for the Town of Menomonie, \$869,545 for the Town of Brunswick, \$857,915 for the Town of Lucas, \$794,835 for the Town of Spring Brook, \$616,285 for the Town of Weston, and \$529,635 for the Town of Howard. These eleven FTTH Projects will be completed by late 2023. The Town of Sherman Project in the amount of \$1,305,440 was not awarded, but will be re-submitted.

Between 2016 and 2021, Telcom has been awarded 12 Grants for Broadband expansion projects in Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire Counties. Telcom has invested over \$6.7 Million of Grant funds and 24-7 Telcom funds for these Broadband projects within those 3 Counties providing access to Broadband service for approx. 1200 locations. Telcom's plan is to continue to build FTTH networks in unserved and underserved areas using State and/or Federal grants and Telcom funding.

3.0 GENERAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Application organization and format

This application should be typed, converted to a PDF format and uploaded to the Commission server using the ERF system.

3.2 Mandatory application requirements

An applicant must include the following information in its application to be eligible for this grant and the application must demonstrate satisfaction of indicated requirements.

3.2.1. Applicant identification and contact information

- a. The name and address of the entity applying for the grant, and the mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address of one or more contact persons representing the applicant.

Name of Entity: 24-7 Telcom, Inc.

*Mailing Address: E4528 County Road C
PO Box 247
Downsville, Wisconsin 54735*

Main Telephone Number: 715-231-2000

*Contacts: - Jim Kusilek, Operations Manager – jkusilek@wwt.coop
- Mark Stenseth, CEO – stenseth@wwt.coop*

- b. If the application proposes a public-private partnership, the identity and contact information for all application partners.

This application does propose a public/private partnership agreement as follows:

*Mailing Address: Town of Union
1506 N. Townhall Rd.
Eau Claire, WI 54703*

Jennifer Meyer, Chair 715-456-5903 townofunion@wwt.net

Beverly Christopherson, Clerk 715-874-6123 townofunion@wwt.net

*Mailing Address: Eau Claire County
721 Oxford Ave.
Eau Claire, WI 54703*

*Donald Mowry, Chair 715-875-4206 donald.mowry@co.eau-claire.wi.us
Eau Claire County
Broadband Committee*

- c. The application must show that the applicant is an organization, a telecommunications utility or a city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility, and as such meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. s 196.504(1).

Telcom is an Alternative Telecommunications Utility certified to provide telecommunications service in the State of Wisconsin pursuant to Section 196.203 of the Wisconsin State Statute. Telcom's PSCW Utility # is 7073 and currently serves the Wisconsin study area #339005.

3.2.2. Description of the project

- a. A static map and description of the area of the State that will be affected by the proposed project.

The attached Maps on Page 5-6 shows the proposed broadband Project area. The proposed area is in the Town of Union, Eau Claire County, WI, in the AT&T-Wisconsin, Eau Claire, WI rate center. As provided in the Executive Summary this Project includes an unserved and underserved area.

Table 1: Project Area Advertised Speed:

<u>Service Provider:</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Down</u>	<u>Up</u>
<u>Unserved Area:</u>			
AT&T Wisconsin*	xDSL	6.0	1.0
Charter Communications*	Cable Modem	940.0	35.0
24-7 Telcom*	FTTH	1000	1000
<u>Underserved Area:</u>			
24-7 Telcom*	xDSL	6.0	.768
24-7 Telcom*	FTTH	1000	1000
AT&T Wisconsin*	xDSL	6.0	1.0
Charter Communications*	Cable Modem	940.0	35.0
T-Mobile**	Fixed Wireless	25.0	3.0

The unserved and underserved area is defined by the Map on page 5 and includes about 140 locations. Telcom will provide a FTTH network to all locations requesting Telcom broadband service.

** The PSCW Broadband Map does show a portion of the Project area served by AT&T Wisconsin with broadband speeds of 6Mbps down and 1Mbps up, Charter Spectrum with broadband speeds of 940Mbps down and 35Mbps up, and Telcom with broadband speeds of 1000Mbps down and 1000Mbps up. Based on the Letters of Support found in Exhibit A, AT&T Wisconsin and Charter Spectrum are not providing reliable Broadband service in the Project area. Telcom does not provide broadband service in the unserved or underserved portion of the Project area.*

***Based on Broadband Survey's, T-Mobile is not providing reliable Broadband Service in the Project area. See Table 4 – Summary of Broadband Survey.*

- b. If the project area lies within a census block designated as served on the PSC Broadband Map, provide additional documentation to demonstrate the actual broadband service that is available in the proposed project area.

In the unserved portion of this Project area no wireline or fixed wireless provider is offering Internet service of actual speeds of at least 5 Mbps for download transmission and 600 Kbps for upload transmission for the resident or business locations.

- c. An explanation of how the proposed project will increase broadband access.

This proposed project would increase broadband access as follows:

- 1) Potential and expected number of households served:

a) Potential households in unserved area are 34. Expected households to be served are 26. The remaining households are expected to be served at their request as wireless service contracts expire.

b) Potential households in the underserved area are 99. Expected households to be served are 75.

- 2) Potential and expected number of businesses served:

a) Potential business locations in the unserved area are 2. Expected business locations to be served are 2. Once broadband service is available in this unserved area businesses will locate in the area. Broadband service will be provided as requested.

b) Potential business locations in the underserved area are 5. Expected business locations to be served are 5.

- 3) Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.

See Section 3.2.5.i and Exhibit A Letters of Support.

- 4) Estimated download and upload speed of the broadband service packages available for purchase.

Telcom will provide broadband down/up speeds at a minimum 300 Mbps/300 Mbps with 1 Gbps/1Gbps available to all locations.

- d. A statement whether the proposed project is targeting the “last mile,” “middle mile,” or “backbone” portion of the broadband infrastructure.

The proposed Project is targeted for last mile of the dedicated broadband infrastructure. Telcom is currently providing wireline broadband service and has access to adequate middle mile and backbone Internet access.

- e. A description of the broadband service to be provided, including estimated download and upload speeds, whether that speed is based on dedicated or shared bandwidth, and the technology that will be used. This description may be illustrated by a map or schematic diagram, as appropriate.

Telcom is currently providing dedicated wireline broadband services using a combination of fiber and copper facilities. Speeds are as provided in the Executive Summary.

Telcom will provide dedicated broadband service using a Fiber-To-The-Home network with Gigabit Passive Optical Network (“GPON”) technology. This fiber network will be similar to the fiber network currently in place and used in the Telcom service territory. The latest technology will be used to provide the highest quality of service.

This Project fiber network will be connected to the existing fiber network and broadband electronics used to provide broadband services in the Telcom service territory.

- f. A schedule by which the applicant intends to complete the components of the proposed project. The project period is up to 24 months.

If the grant application for the Project is approved by June, 2022, Telcom is proposing the following schedule:

<i>Jan. 2023 – Mar. 2023</i>	<i>Order equipment/Staking</i>
<i>Apr. 2023 – Nov. 2023</i>	<i>Bury cable and install main line</i>
<i>Apr. 2023 – Dec., 2023</i>	<i>Install electronics at customer locations</i>
<i>Oct. 2023 – Dec., 2023</i>	<i>Turn up service</i>
<i>Jan., 2024</i>	<i>Request final payment of Grant Funds</i>

3.2.3. Itemized Budget

- a. In addition to the Summary of Project Budget that is included as page 4, applicant should include a price list or quote for any equipment the applicant intends to purchase, including capital expenditures. The application should also indicate whether the facilities involved would be owned, rented or leased.

Table 2: Project Construction Costs:

The Town of Union FTTH Project summary of the construction cost for the fiber network is provided below. All fiber construction will be provided by a third-party contractor. All of the network will be owned by Telcom.

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION COST BUDGET DETAIL

CONTRACTUAL CONSULTANT FEES	QUANTITY	COST EACH	EXTENDED COST	CATEGORY TOTAL
BURIED FIBER NETWORK: TOTAL MILES OF 12 TO 288 FIBER STRAND CABLE INCLUDING SPLICING, MANHOLES, HANDHOLES, AND EQUIPMENT AT COST PER MILE	9.7	\$ 73,196	\$ 710,000	
ENGINEERING	1	\$ 50,400	\$ 50,400	\$ 760,400
EQUIPMENT				
SPLITTER CABINET	1	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	
GPON BLADE & CHASSIS	1	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	
SPLITTERS & OPTICS	5	\$ 2,000	\$ 10,000	
ONTS	157	\$ 400	\$ 62,800	\$ 92,800
SUPPLIES				
MINOR MATERIALS	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
LABOR (SALARY, FRINGE)				
EMPLOYEE LABOR RATE	1256	\$ 90	\$ 113,040	\$ 113,040
PERMITTING, LICENSING FEES	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TRAVEL	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
OTHER	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST BUDGET				\$ 966,240

- b. The application must show that the grant, if awarded, will not subsidize the expenses of a telecommunications provider or the monthly bills of telecommunications customers. For purposes of this grant program, subsidy means a contribution to the operating costs, including profit, of the telecommunications provider.

The grant funds requested will not subsidize the expense to provide telecommunications services to end user customers.

The grant funds requested in this Application will only be used to help pay for a portion of the fiber network and electronics used to provide broadband. No grant funds will be used for monthly recurring operating costs for broadband or telecommunications services.

- c. The application must show that the grant funds requested will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved areas covered by the application. Construction of broadband infrastructure may include any of the following:
- Project planning that takes place during the performance period.
 - Obtaining construction permits.
 - Construction of facilities including construction of both “middle mile” and “last mile” infrastructure.
 - Installation and testing of the broadband service.

See Table 2 above for a summary of construction costs.

3.2.4. Priority factors supporting the application

- a. **Matching funds**. A description of the matching funds the applicant will invest in the proposed project, if any. For each element, indicate the type of match (cash, salary expense, or in-kind contribution). If the application is submitted by a partnership, identify the partner responsible for providing each element of the

proposed matching funds. Note: The requirement for this information is satisfied via inclusion of the completed Funding Statement as page 4 of the Application.

- If available, provide documentation to support an offer of matching funds (minutes of a town board meeting, a letter from a prospective customer or local government official, etc.).
- Matching funds contributions must be a firm commitment of funding to the project. Contributions that vary based on the amount of actual sales, customer contributions, or other criteria will not be given weight.

As provided on Table 2 the total construction costs for this fiber project is \$966,240. This does not include the cost of the existing Telcom broadband network back to the serving wire center or the existing broadband electronics currently in place to provide broadband service to existing customers. Telcom matching funds will be a combination of cash and Telcom labor. Detail of the matching funds is provided in Funding Statement on page 4 of the Application.

The grant request in this application is \$193,248.00 or 20% of the new construction costs. These funds will be used for third-party contractors for the fiber and burying the fiber.

Marshfield Clinic Health System ("MCHS") is supportive of the Telcom FY 2022 Broadband Expansion Grant Applications in Dunn County.

The balance of the construction project will be paid for by Telcom.

b. **Public-private partnership.**

If the public-private partnership is memorialized in a joint venture agreement or other writing, provide a copy of that agreement. If the partnership has not been reduced to a written agreement, provide a short description of the management role, financial commitment, or other contribution to the project for each participating partner.

- In scoring this element, information regarding active engagement of diverse communities in the planning, permitting, or marketing of the project will be given weight as well.

This Project includes the following Public Private Partnership Agreement:

The Town of Union has signed a Public Private Partnership Agreement with Telcom and has made a financial commitment to invest \$274,000.00 to this Project. See Exhibit B – for a copy of the Agreement. The Town of Union has also agreed to reduce or eliminate any fees for the Project.

Eau Claire County has agreed to Partner with Telcom and contribute \$274,000.00 to this Project. See Exhibit A – Letters of support.

c. **Existing broadband service.** A list of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The degree to which the proposed project avoids duplicating existing broadband infrastructure.
- The application of a wireless broadband service provider proposing significant overlap with existing broadband service in addition to service to an unserved area will not be given priority consideration.

- Provide a list of all landline broadband service providers (DSL, cable or fiber to the home) and fixed wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed broadband project.
- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing landline and fixed wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers.
- Provide a list of mobile wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed project.
- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing mobile wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers. (The presence of existing mobile wireless providers does not contribute to or affect the evaluation of existing broadband service in the project area for purposes of priority consideration, but provides a more complete picture of the broadband options available to residents.)

Because of the very rural area of the State and the rough wooded areas no other broadband provider will build a network in the unserved area of this Project.

See Section 3.2.2.a Table 1 for a summary of wireline and fixed wireless broadband service providers in the Project area.

There are no other landline or fixed wireless providers providing broadband service at the required levels that overlap the Project unserved area.

- d) **Project impact.** A description of the geographic area and the population, both in terms of absolute numbers and likely users, which will be serviced by the proposed project. Indicate the number of anticipated residential and business customers in the project area, if known. Explain the speed and quality of internet service that will be available. Include information about the range of packages available for purchase. Provide details on any low-income access programs and steps the project will take to support adoption.

The Project currently includes 133 resident locations and 7 business locations.

If the Commission awards the grant application to Telcom the following broadband expansion will occur:

- 1) *All 133 resident locations in the unserved and underserved area will have access to a minimum of 300 Mbps/300 Mbps broadband service.*
- 2) *The 7 business locations in the unserved and underserved area will have up to 1 Gbps/1 Gbps available from Telcom.*

Future homes and businesses in the Project area through growth and developments will also be served by this network.

Not only will the Telcom fiber route and FTTH Project provide high-speed broadband service to over 140 locations, the following locations will benefit by the availability of the fiber route:

- *This Town of Union Project will connect businesses and homes near Interstate 94. This is a main corridor connecting the Twin Cities to the Eau Claire area and a significant economic development opportunity for Eau Claire. This area is an excellent location for a business or resident to relocate if fiber is installed.*
- *Marshfield Clinic Health System will have access to more of their patients in the Project area to provide health care services through the use of Telehealth.*
- *High-speed broadband will be available to several customers that work from their homes or telecommute to their business location.*
- *Locations that have security systems will be able to use them with a higher quality of monitoring.*

e) **Scalability.** A description of how the proposed project could expand or improve the broadband service it delivers, while maintaining the quality of its broadband service. This description should include specific projected increases in the following parameters that are known at the time of the application:

- The number of users.
- The number of network nodes.
- The number of services provided.
- The geographic area served by the project.

This description may also include a discussion of possible growth potential that is outside the commitment the applicant is making as part of its application.

The FTTH Project is Scalable and would provide Telcom a pathway to service many more homes in unserved and underserved areas in the future. The Project will serve an area of approximately 3.6 square miles. The Project will start at a new Fiber Optic Splitter Cabinet to be placed along CTH EE. This cabinet will be installed during the Project and is intended to provide service to an unserved and underserved area and it's expected to be an area for future growth due to its proximity to the City of Eau Claire. The FY2022 Town of Union project will leverage existing transport facilities.

The Telcom broadband Project described in this Application will be built to provide access to broadband service for up to 140 locations. The Project will provide up to 1 Gbps/1 Gbps service to all future residential and businesses to be located in the Project area.

The fiber network for this Project, which is included in this area, will be the fiber backbone for the future economic development in the Town.

g) **Economic Development.** A description of how the proposed project will promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region. This description may be supplemented with a letter from one or more persons discussing the potential economic impact the project could have for that individual or business.

In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

- A discussion of potential economic impact the project could have for an individual business located in the project area.
- An explanation of how an improved download and upload transmission speed could better support a specific business in the project area.

- An explanation of the likely impact improved broadband service could have on residential property values, supported by local sales data if available.
- A demonstration of how improved broadband service to a residential portion of the project could benefit a telecommuting population.
- A demonstration of how the speeds and service being offered by the project fits with current and future economic needs of the community and local businesses.

High speed broadband service is an essential element for economic development in any rural community. A FTTH broadband network with 1 Gbps/1 Gbps service available throughout the Project Area meets the customer needs now and future increased demands. Broadband provides the ability for businesses to add employees and provide on-line training to existing employees for employment retention. High speed broadband also provides residents with access to health care facilities, education facilities and world wide access for on-line purchases of services and products. Also telecommuting provides an opportunity for residents to save on travel costs and drive time to a work location.

See Table 4 Summary of Broadband Survey and Exhibit A - Letters of Support for specific examples of how broadband service supports economic development in a community.

- h) **Effect upon broadband service to adjacent areas.** A description of whether the proposed project will or will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider or competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project area.

This Project will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to this Project area. See Map on page 5. Telcom plans to offer broadband service to all unserved and underserved locations in the Project area.

3.2.5. Other information supporting the application

- a. A description of applicant's history or experience constructing broadband communications facilities in the state and elsewhere.
- If applicable, an applicant must comment upon the status of all prior broadband expansion grant projects, including the type of broadband technology used, the facility route actually built or installed, the number of residential and business customers actually connected, and other relevant details of the prior project(s).
 - An applicant may also comment on broadband construction projects undertaken in prior years that were not funded in part by the Broadband Expansion Grant program.

See the Executive Summary in Section 2 and History of 24-7 Telcom, Inc. on Table 3.

- b. A description of how the proposed project will or will not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure.

The PSCW Broadband Map does show a portion of the Project area served by AT&T Wisconsin with broadband speeds of 6Mbps down and 1Mbps up, Charter Spectrum with broadband speeds of 940Mbps down and 35Mbps up, T-Mobile with

broadband speeds of 25Mbps down and 3Mbps up, and Telcom with broadband speeds of 1000Mbps down and 1000Mbps up. Based on the Letters of Support found in Exhibit A, AT&T Wisconsin, Charter Spectrum, and T-Mobile are not providing reliable Broadband service in the Project area. Telcom does not provide broadband service in the unserved or underserved portion of the Project area.

Telcom will provide a fiber connection with broadband speeds of up to 1 Gbps/1 Gbps to requesting locations.

- c. A description of an applicant's financial ability to undertake the proposed broadband construction project. This may include information such as the number of years the company has been in operation, documentation of successful completion of similar infrastructure projects, evidence that sufficient funds are available to cover project expenditure and match, customer turn-over rates, and credit rating.

Telcom has been providing broadband service since 1999. Telcom has the experienced staff and finances to undertake this Project. See the Executive Summary for a list of broadband projects successfully completed by Telcom. Also see Table 3 for a history of 24-7 Telcom, Inc.

- d. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of individuals to access health care service from home, including any impact upon the costs of those services.
- Specific information from a hospital or clinic in the project area that currently uses or intends to use home-based telemedicine equipment to enhance access health care service would best illustrate this point.

All customers that request Telcom broadband service will have more than adequate broadband speed available to have access to health care facilities from their home. This broadband service will help reduce health care costs for transportation to medical facilities, office visit charges and provide faster response times. Customers will also be able to take advantage of online health monitoring applications. Such online services include: blood pressure along with blood clot monitoring, oversight of insulin and pain pumps, in home cancer treatments, exercise and diet monitoring, adjustment to pacemakers and other heart monitors and monitoring of diseases. In addition, those Veterans who reside in this rural area that have far distances to travel to reach a VA facility will be able to subscribe to a high-speed service that would provide video conferencing.

- e. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.
- Specific information on the likely number of students that will benefit from improved access to educational opportunities from home would be useful.
 - Specific information regarding educational programs that are currently available for students in the project area would be useful.

All customers that request Telcom broadband services will be pleased to know that all students in the household will have more than adequate broadband speeds for all homework assignments, research and access to all educational opportunities on the web. Students that are assigned a computer, by the area School District, will now be able to do assignments, school projects and homework from home. See Exhibit A for Letters of Support from area School Districts. Also, online undergraduate and

graduate education programs will be available to all households. All available at very reasonable pricing as provided in the Executive Summary.

- f. A description of actions taken by a city, village, town, or county in support of the grant application, including that have not been discussed in the context of a public-private partnership above, but not limited to:
- The contribution of funds, easements or permissions to use publically-owned real estate, construction materials, or other items of value to the grant project.
 - The contribution of in-kind assistance to the grant project in the form of waived fees and expenses for obtaining use permits and permissions.
 - The contribution of other items of benefit to the grant project, such as public outreach and education, vehicles, water, etc.
 - Certification as a Broadband Forward Community or Telecommuter Forward Community.

Eau Claire County has partnered with Telcom and will contribute \$274,000.00 to this Project if this application is approved. See Exhibit A – Letters of Support.

See Exhibit B for the Town of Union Public Private Partnership Agreement.

Eau Claire County is a Certified Broadband Forward Community.

- g. Letters and messages in support of the application submitted by prospective customers, local government officials, and other interested persons.

See Exhibit A for Letters of Support and Table 4 Summary of Broadband Survey.

- h. Any other equitable factor that the applicant desires to discuss, including one or more of the factors in Wis. Stat. § 196.03(6) that the applicant believes its project would advance. In discussing this element, the following information may be useful:

- 1 Technical support and training materials that the applicant intends to provide.
Telcom has a Network Operations Center with trained staff that manage and monitor our networks. Our business is that of helping networks run correctly, and more importantly, run smoothly. We offer a managed Smart home Wifi service to all of our broadband customers. In addition to conducting remote checks we monitor vendor releases, software updates, and maintain network security and performance for all of our customers that subscribe to our Smart Home Wifi service. We consult, we build, we install, and we support 24/7/365 through our trained local staff.
- 2 Information that the applicant intends to use to promote better broadband adoption and use.
We do premise visit to every address to discuss Fiber to the Home (FTTH) with all of our grant projects. We provide the new customers with a packet of information, including the stages of building our all fiber optic network to them. At that time, customers sign our permission slips to bury fiber optics on their property, and more often than not, customers select the services bundle they want to have installed. There is no need to lock the customers into any contract; we know bringing a future proof all fiber network is mission-critical. Our mindset is to build it once and to build it right.
- 3 A description of a program or outreach to provide assistance to individuals of low income.

Telcom provides various programs and outreach to provide assistance to individuals of low income, including the following:

- *As an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Telcom provides discounts to resident customers for broadband service in accordance with Section PSC 160.062 Lifeline Program of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and FCC regulations for Lifeline support.*
- *Affordable Connectivity Program*
- *Telcom also works directly with all local school districts to identify students that are not connected to a broadband service and determine if Telcom has facilities at that student's home location*

i. *Secondary benefits of this project include.*

- *Telecommuting. Telcom and the Town are planning to establish this area as a Telecommuting focused area. Promoting that both resident and business can work from their home to business locations in both Wisconsin and Minnesota.*
- *Tourism. Because of the local rivers and numerous lakes in the County, the Project area is a large tourism destination drawing people from all over the United States. There are many places for fishing, hiking, biking, and site seeing. The many miles of country roads also provide for an excellent area for motorcycle riding and touring. Many tourists would spend extended vacation times in the area if they have broadband Internet access service which allows them to work out of their vacation location, currently they are limited to just a weekend trip without broadband. With the potential to stay the entire season or even an extended weekend drives up tourism dollars.*
- *Increased tourism not only helps economic development in the area by increased job opportunities but also sales of products and services for the local business community.*

TABLE 3
24-7 TELCOM, INC.
FY 2022 BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
HISTORY OF 24-7 TELCOM, INC.

For the past sixty eight years West Wisconsin Telcom Cooperative, Inc. ("WWTC") has been providing state of the art telecommunication services in portions of Dunn, Eau Claire, Chippewa, Pepin, Pierce and St. Croix counties in Wisconsin. This included being an industry leader in 1995 by offering Internet access to its end user customers over dial up facilities. WWTC was again an industry leader in 2009 by completing a Fiber-To-The Home project which provided high speed broadband services to 100% of its customers in those rural areas of Wisconsin.

In 2015 WWTC was recognized at the National level as being a Gig Broadband provider. WWTC has been designated a Smart Rural Community by NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association "(NTCA)" for ongoing efforts to improve the data network and overall technology culture for our customers. WWTC has also received the "GIG Certified" designation by NTCA. This means our network was tested and was certified capable of speeds up to 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps). These designations set our communities apart from other communities that do not have a provider capable of speeds up to 1 Gbps, which may help attract resident and businesses to our area.

In November, 1999 WWTC's affiliate 24-7 Telcom, Inc. ("Telcom") started offering telecommunications service in the Menomonie, Wisconsin area. Services included local access service, switched and special access service, toll resale and Internet access through its landline broadband service.

Telcom's plans are to continue to expand its fiber network to provide broadband service in unserved and underserved areas at affordable rates.

TABLE 4
24-7 TELCOM, INC.
FY 2022 BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
SUMMARY OF BROADBAND SURVEY

In August 2021, 24-7 Telcom provided a broadband and communications survey for unserved/underserved portions of the Town of Union.

The survey responses indicated that:

-
-
-

Specific comments are as follows:

“I work remotely as a software engineer and my children are schooled through a virtual charter school. We would love to have another adorable option as charter spectrum has been terrible to work with, but have been the only one with fast enough and affordable enough services.”

“I currently get ATT internet service. It feels slow. It is hard to stream movies because they constantly stop for buffering. FaceTime calls often have a poor connection. I often have long wait times when I use my computer for research, accessing my bank, etc. A serviceman told me ATT will not be upgrading my service.

I will not be starting a business. I have done Telehealth and probably will again. I will likely want to sell my house in the next ten years. Good broadband would help.

Several neighbors have told me of their frustrations with their broadband service.”

“Better service for Zoom & Business.”

“ViaSat is pretty fair for satellite when it is up, but it is better than HughesNet was. I have a Hot Spots from ATT that I use whenever ViaSat is out. If I use it for streaming I still get a lot of buffering. I have worked with fiber when I worked and it is very reliable. I definitely will be a subscriber if we are able to. I have lived in this location for 25 years and I have tried to get a faster connection for all that time.”

“Through Verizon (despite paying for an unlimited friends & family plan) our "high-speed" data routinely ends within two weeks during a monthly billing cycle. At times, the slowdown has occurred within 7 days. This reduced service has occurred even though we have been out-of-state and not even utilizing the service. We have a smart TV but cannot stream movies or other programs without the risk of using up our "high-speed" data and having to live with painfully slow connection speeds. The slower speeds, for all practical purposes, our unusable as websites fail to connect and downloads are unsuccessful. We use the internet to do our banking, manage our health care, pay bills, purchase goods & services, research businesses, communicate with family and friends, and so much more. High-speed internet service is no longer a luxury but rather a necessity in today's world. We look forward to having access to fiber optic cable and encourage West Wisconsin Telcom to submit a broadband application to extend Fiber to the Home in our neighborhood.”

“It would be more speed by far that I have now I believe. It would also allow us to install a security system in our house. Also for your information our driveway is very long to our home

approximately 1200 ft. back from street. Thanks for your consideration we would definitely like and use and buy this fiber optic internet. Gary and Patricia Holstein”

“Good morning! We were excited to hear that WWT might be coming back to us!! We moved from a house that was in your district, and absolutely loved it. Never had problems with the internet, WI FI, e-mail set-up.

When we moved to this location we just sick about having to go with a company that does not have the personable people to talk to when we had a question. Of course, we have Spectrum as we were forced to have. Who to talk to??? Who to contact without talking to someone from Pakistan?? BTW: Jesse in the Menomonie office was my go to guy!! I, (Patti) don't know what I would have done without Jesse! He was always my hero! :)

We try to watch a Netflix movie almost every night, our e-mail is a necessity, our granddaughter next door comes over to do her virtual school assignments when her system is down (Spectrum), and 6 grandkids loved our WI-FI as they didn't have it at that time! Patricia Pritchard”

“Very happy to hear that we might get WWT back!! YAY!!”

“Work from home and also run a small business from home with internet.”

“Mother and I are in our mid-80s. Broadband would assist us in Visual communicating with our daughters.”

“The internet service we currently have is through AT&T using DSL. We have limited options for internet providers which is surprising since we are less than a mile from the city limits. It has always been frustrating as to the lack of speed, and more apparent than ever in 2020 when my daughter was trying to finish her last year of medical school, attending virtual interviews for residency, taking and submitting tests. At the same time, I was trying to work from home periodically. We could not be online at the same time.

We would use broadband for:

Working from home

Telehealth services

Virtual learning

Smart devices

I’m also concerned with the marketability of our home if we were to put it on the market to sell. Most households need faster internet speeds to accommodate their streaming, computer, and device needs.”

“I used to work from home when we lived in Osseo, WI. When we moved to Sportsman Dr we couldn't find internet fast enough to continue working from home. We tried HughesNet first and found the satellite too slow and unreliable along with being expensive.

T-Mobile is better but still not reliable. We basically had no service during any of the music festivals. I suppose there were too many people using the cell towers at once.

Our grandchildren were unable to remote learn while at our house. Especially both at the same time. Our son-in-law is unable to work remotely from our house when they are visiting. They were interested in relocating and building on a piece of our land but can't without access to acceptable internet service.

During Covid19 we were doing exercise classes by Zoom. There were issues with sound and feed.”

“It will make the internet easier to access and use. It is very frustrating now - hurry up and then wait!”

“This is for our business. It would be nice to have another option available other than charter for internet needs...and maybe telephone at one point.”

“Between spectrum home internet and Verizon cellular we have excellent speed and access. I’m looking to reduce costs at this point.”

“Would be interested in another internet provider. Have not been happy with our current provider for some time. Speed is slow. And the price keeps going up. If we were going to upgrade, it would not be with our current company.”

“I am the President of Gaulrapp Technologies Inc. and work with various national retail companies from my home. Fiber to the Home would be extremely beneficial to my business. Frequently I’m downloading and uploading large files, as well as attending video conferences. Given my current speeds, uploading a 1GB file can take at least a full 6 minutes. This, of course, assumes I have 100% of the bandwidth. However, in a post-Covid19 world, our 3 kids have regularly needed to attend school virtually. On top of all that, our family all enjoy online gaming. Families, this generation, are more connected than ever. We use the internet for everything from schooling, to work, to entertainment. FTTH almost borders on necessity. FTTH would allow my business to be even more efficient. I’m excited to see this implemented on a personal level as well as a business level. Finally the Eau Claire area can move on from the Technological Dark Ages. Of course - this all depends on cost. It will need to be priced appropriately for customers to adopt FTTH.”

EXHIBIT A
24-7 TELCOM, INC.
FY 2022 BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
LETTERS OF SUPPORT



March 10, 2022

Ms. Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53707-9100

Re: Letter of Support for the Town of Union FTTH Broadband Expansion Grant proposal

Marshfield Clinic is an integrated health system located in Marshfield, WI serving central, north-central and north-western Wisconsin, this includes patients who reside in Eau Claire County. We are a Mission, Vision and Value's driven organization that strives to "Enrich the Lives of those we serve". MCHS has used Telehealth to reach unserved and underserved populations throughout Wisconsin since 1997.

MCHS is supportive of the efforts of this proposed project by the Town of Union and offer this letter of support for their grant application. This project will expand internet access to about 149 residential homes.

Over the course of the last 6 years, MCHS has worked closely with the communities we serve in an effort to help them prepare for a time in which more healthcare can be delivered using technology directly into the patient's home. The COVID-19 Pandemic accelerated the move to delivering care via telehealth much more quickly than expected. However, Telehealth was able to respond quickly and offer continued access to healthcare services by our patients throughout the Pandemic. Since March of 2020, MCHS has completed over 400,000 telehealth encounters that were not permissible prior to the Pandemic. Despite the rapid advancement of Telehealth, access to broadband internet services continue to be our patient's top barrier in accessing these services.

Looking forward to a Post-COVID world, Telehealth is not going away. Federal legislation is expected to make these new flexibilities to use telehealth permanent. Telehealth visits allow patients better access to healthcare without the need to travel or miss work or school. This allows patients to more conveniently maintain their chronic illness appointments, have a visit with their Primary Care Doctor or complete needed follow-up care. A number of new services are likely to join the array of telehealth services already offered by health systems across the country. A patient's access to broadband at home will be a determining factor in which services they can consume and which they cannot. MCHS will be at the forefront of offering these new care modalities.

Collaborative efforts are needed to expand broadband across Wisconsin and MCHS is proud to support this Broadband expansion project and we urge the Public Service Commission to fund this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Turney', is written over a horizontal line.

Susan Turney MD, MS, FACP, FACMPE
CEO



Momentum West

NanoRite Innovation Center | 2322 Alpine Road | Suite 7 | Eau Claire, WI 54703

Email | info@momentumwest.org

Phone | 715-874-4673

Fax | 715-874-4683

March 8, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower- 6th Floor
Madison, Wisconsin 53705-9100

Momentum West supports 24-7 Telcom's applications to the Public Service Commission. Grant funding will greatly improve internet access to citizens, students, and businesses in these important parts of Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties:

Town of Lucas, town of Menomonie, town of Eau Galle, town of Sherman, town of Dunn, and the town of Union.

As the Director of Momentum West, a regional economic development organization covering ten counties in west central Wisconsin, these projects are crucial in our efforts to attract and retain business, industry, and talent in the region. One of the current challenges in the region is the lack of broadband infrastructure to adequately serve the needs of businesses, our regions residents, and students – our future workforce. The West Central Wisconsin Broadband Alliance, an extension of our organization, continues to explore opportunities and champion efforts to improve broadband access throughout the region. These projects will help fill some of the many broadband gaps within the region.

24-7 Telcom has made substantial investment in West Central Wisconsin and has demonstrated cooperation with local citizens, businesses, and organizations. They are a valued member of the region, and we support their request for these grants. The extension of their service to these unserved areas would be a great benefit and is worthy of your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Jahn
Executive Director
Momentum West
2322 Alpine Rd
Eau Claire WI 54703



March 11, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker Secretary to the Commission

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

North Tower, 6th Floor

Hill Farms State Office Building

4822 Madison Yards Way

Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Dear Secretary Powell,

Please use this correspondence as a **Letter of Support** for the 24-7 Telcom - Town of Union FTTH Project within Eau Claire County, Wisconsin. Eau Claire Economic Development Corporation is in favor of this Project.

Rural Broadband Expansion is an important commodity in Western Wisconsin for economic development, access to healthcare and remote learning capabilities. This can be made a reality with these grant funds to benefit the livelihood for these community members.

Town of Union:

The Town of Union FTTH Project will provide Fiber to the Home Broadband access using GPON technology to approximately 8 Business and 149 Residential locations in the Town of Union. This project will cover 3.6 square miles and serve the remaining unserved area within the Town of Union. The Town of Union will be 100% served with Broadband service if we are awarded this grant.

Thank you for your consideration for this important project.

Luke Hanson,

Executive Director

Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation
PO Box 1108, Eau Claire, WI 54702
715.471.6142

www.eauclaire-wi.com



**Eau Claire County
BROADBAND COMMITTEE**
Eau Claire County Courthouse - Room 3344
721 Oxford Avenue
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54703-5212
(715) 839-4741

March 3, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower- 6th Floor
Madison, Wisconsin 53705-9100

RE: 24/7 Telcom, Inc. - Wisconsin Public Service Commission Broadband Expansion Grant Application – Town of Union

Dear Ms. Powell Coker:

The Eau Claire County Broadband Committee strongly supports the proposed 24/7 Telcom project that will provide fiber to the premises of 150 unserved residents and 8 businesses in the Eau Claire County Town of Union. With this project, all residents and businesses in the Town of Union will have access to high-speed broadband internet service. The proposed project is a public-private partnership between 24/7 Telcom and the Town of Union. The Town of Union is committing \$274,000 of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to this project and Eau Claire County will match that amount if their grant application is approved.

In our digital age, inadequate broadband infrastructure disproportionately affects small, rural communities. Poor broadband infrastructure limits the ability of residents to take advantage of virtual learning opportunities, to work remotely, and to access telehealth options. Poor broadband infrastructure puts rural communities at a competitive disadvantage and is a major roadblock to economic development compared to communities with high-speed broadband services. Local businesses are losing opportunities because of poor Internet connections. The fact of the matter is, that in our connected economy, access to a high-speed broadband Internet connection is an absolute necessity.

Eau Claire County is committed to expanding broadband infrastructure throughout the County. In 2019, the Eau Claire County Broadband Committee was formed. Made up of eleven members with varied broadband expertise and backgrounds, they have been working to build strong relationships with Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Townships, and other partners to expand broadband access, especially in rural areas. What follows are some of the Committee's accomplishments toward that goal:

- Advocate for the expansion of broadband infrastructure access to residences and businesses
- Strong supporter of the town and internet service provider partnerships
- Recipient of the PSC Broadband Forward Community designation
- Supported towns to be designated as Broadband Telecommuter Communities
- Developed an online broadband survey with a speed test to collect more accurate data for use in grant applications
- Committed to provide a financial match for successful PSC Broadband Expansion Grant applications
- Partnered with UW-Eau Claire to develop a Digital Navigator program
- Partnering with United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley to develop a Digital Equity & Inclusion program
 - NOTE: These last two would be available to Town of Union residents and businesses to increase adoption and improve technical skills.

As the Chair of the Eau Claire County Broadband Committee, I urge you to approve the grant proposal to expand broadband access in the Town of Union. Enhanced broadband services will give residents the ability to stay connected, enable them to take advantage of virtual learning opportunities, enable them to work remotely, and enable them to access telehealth options. It will also give businesses the ability to take advantage of economic development opportunities they cannot take advantage of now.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Donald Mowry, Chair
Eau Claire County Broadband Committee



JEFF SMITH

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR – 31ST DISTRICT



March 9, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Review Panel Members,

As you consider applications for the 2022 round of the Broadband Expansion Grant Program, I urge you to consider supporting the Town of Union and 24-7 Telcom for their broadband deployment project. I'm encouraged to see the Town of Union and 24-7 Telcom partner with each other on this project to expand high-speed internet in one of the most unserved areas of our state. This project for your consideration will have a positive impact on Eau Claire County and western Wisconsin as a whole.

24-7 Telcom has served western Wisconsin for years now, helping to increase broadband access for unserved and underserved areas in western Wisconsin. According to a report by *Forward Analytics*, Eau Claire County ranks 56 out of 72 counties in rural broadband access. The need for broadband expansion is evident in Eau Claire County, and 24-7 Telcom has a commendable track record of expanding broadband to rural areas in Wisconsin.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted just how important broadband access is for our communities to thrive and for residents to stay connected. 24-7 Telcom aims to cover 3.6 square miles in the Town of Union, connecting broadband to 8 businesses and almost 150 residential locations. Internet is no longer a luxury— it's a necessity. This project's success will create more opportunity for our community by helping our students, businesses and farmers access high-speed internet.

I am proud to represent Wisconsin's 31st Senate District, and I am committed to the betterment of Wisconsin as a whole. 24-7 Telcom has shown a clear and consistent commitment to help our communities receive the broadband services they need, which is why I recommend the approval of this grant application.

Sincerely,

JEFF SMITH
State Senator
31st Senate District



Warren Petryk

State Representative • 93rd Assembly District

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Wisconsin Public Service Commission

4822 Madison Yards Way

Madison, WI 53705

RE: Towns of Dunn, Eau Galle, and Union Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Commission Members,

I write to you today to express my support for the Towns of Dunn, Eau Galle, and Union receiving the PSC Broadband Expansion Grant on behalf of 24-7 Telecom Inc. The Towns of Dunn, Eau Galle, and Union would be able to serve the remaining unserved areas, and therefore, be 100% served with broadband if awarded this grant.

Increasing broadband access in the Towns of Dunn, Eau Galle, and Union would enable community members to access much needed services such as telehealth and virtual school, as well as maintain relationships with friends and family members during the COVID-19 pandemic. This important project will also maximize Western Wisconsin's potential to have a flourishing economy.

I ask you to please consider and approve the Towns of Dunn, Eau Galle, and Union Broadband Expansion Grant application which will support economic development and foster increased access to improve the lives of the citizens of the townships.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions for me, please feel free to contact me in my office at (608) 266-0660.

Sincerely,

Warren Petryk
State Representative
93rd Assembly District

RON KIND
THIRD DISTRICT, WISCONSIN
SENIOR WHIP
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 10, 2022

LA CROSSE OFFICE
205 5TH AVENUE SOUTH, SUITE 400
LA CROSSE, WI 54601
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Website: kind.house.gov

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
North Tower, 6th Floor
Hill Farms State Office Building
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Dear Ms. Coker:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of strong support on behalf of 24-7 Telecom's Town of Union FTTH Project Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program application. It is my sincere hope that you consider and look favorably upon this grant proposal.

As the U.S. Representative for Wisconsin's 3rd Congressional District, I have a keen interest in supporting much needed broadband expansion projects in rural Wisconsin. The Town of Union FTTH Project will provide Fiber to the Home Broadband access using GPON technology to approximately 8 Business and 149 Residential locations in the Town of Union. This project will cover 3.6 square miles and serve the remaining unserved area within the Town of Union. The Town of Union will be 100% served with Broadband service if this grant is awarded.

Based on the past and present performance of 24-7 Telecom, I am confident in the ability of this provider and local partners to effectively use this grant funding to expand broadband services in this underserved region of Western Wisconsin. I am happy to lend this grant proposal my strong support. Given its merit and potential benefits, I sincerely believe this proposal deserves your support as well.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me if I may be able to provide further information in support of this grant application.

Sincerely,



Ron Kind
Member of Congress

RJK/mda

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EXHIBIT B

24-7 TELCOM, INC.
FY 2022 BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT – TOWN OF UNION

BROADBAND ACCESS GRANT APPLICATION
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

This Public Private Partnership Agreement (“Agreement”) is made by and between the Town of Union, a Wisconsin municipal corporation (the “Town”) and 24-7 Telcom, Inc. a Wisconsin corporation (“Telcom”). The Town and Telcom are individually referred to as “Party” and collectively referred to as “Parties”.

WHEREAS, the Town seeks to help provide access to broadband services in unserved and/or underserved areas and to encourage economic development within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Telcom proposes to construct broadband infrastructure to reach certain unserved and/or underserved resident and business locations requesting broadband service in the Town where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, Telcom is applying for a Fiscal Year 2022 Broadband Expansion Grant (“Grant”) to build Fiber-To-The Home (“FTTH”) in a hard-to-serve area in the Town. The project area includes a fiber optic network serving approximately 105 unserved/underserved locations in the areas outlined in Exhibit A. (“the Project”); and

WHEREAS, the Town is a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the Town desires to enter into this Agreement to work with Telcom to secure funding through application(s) to public grant and loan programs intending to construct broadband Infrastructure or through alignment of other appropriate external funding sources for economic development to support the Project; and

WHEREAS, at the February 8, 2022 Town Board meeting, the Board voted to proceed with Telcom and the proposed joint broadband Project between the Town and Telcom, and to contribute an amount of ~~\$274,000.00~~ to extend fiber into the Project area upon the award of a Wisconsin Public Service Commission (“Commission”) Grant; and

WHEREAS, the Town will assist in public education, outreach, and mutually agreed upon operations in support of successful Project outcomes. The Town shall also provide in-kind assistance to the Project in the form of waived fees for permitting, zoning, rights of way, and easements necessary for the Project; and

WHEREAS, enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the Town for desirable economic growth through addressing existing service disparities, while providing a means for accessing the advantages of technology-based economic development practice for the subject localities.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:

1. Purpose. The Parties, agree to cooperate and exercise their powers jointly for the purpose of providing support and/or revenues for the Project – Exhibit A includes a map showing the Project area where Telcom fiber facilities are to be installed. The Project will extend Telcom's existing broadband network with a Fiber-to-the-Home ("FTTH") network to existing resident and business locations in the Project area. The FTTH network will also be available for all future businesses and residences that will be located in the Project area.

2. Authorization. Each Party shall authorize the execution, delivery and performance of this Agreement.

3. Project Funding. Telcom intends to request a Commission Grant. The Town has agreed to provide a contribution of \$274,000.00 to the cost of the Project, to be paid as provided in section 4 below. Telcom, directly and through other sources, will provide the balance of the funding for the Project. If the Grant is awarded, Telcom may accept the Grant and enter into an acceptable Commission Broadband Grant agreement or, in Telcom's sole discretion, may decline the Grant and not enter into a Grant agreement. The Town's contribution shall only be payable if the Grant is accepted.

4. Payment to Telcom. The Town shall pay the amount of \$ 274,000.00 as follows:

Start of fiber construction	\$ <u>137,000.00</u>
Final Project Status Report submitted to Commission	\$ <u>137,000.00</u>

5. Project Ownership. Telcom shall have sole ownership of the Project and shall be solely responsible for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project.

6. Liability. Telcom shall have sole liability for the Project and any and all claims, obligations, liability, costs, demands, damages, expenses, fines, penalties, or causes of action ("Claims") that may arise from the Project and its construction, operation, or maintenance. Each Party and its successors and assigns shall indemnify and hold the other Party and its officials, employees, and agents harmless from any and all Claims, including the costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, which may arise out of the ownership, construction, maintenance, or operation of the Project regardless of any fault on the part of the Party, its officials, employees, or agents.

7. Records. Telcom will maintain records related to the Project; and, during the Project, Telcom will make those records available upon reasonable request of the Town.

8. Report. Until completion of the project, Telcom shall meet with the Town on a semi-annual basis for the purpose of presenting an oral report on the status of the Project. The date, time and place of such meeting shall be determined cooperatively among the Parties. No less than seven (7) days prior to such meeting Telcom shall provide a written report regarding siting, construction progress with respect to the Project.

9. Effective Date. This Agreement shall become effective upon its execution by both Parties.

10. Termination Date. If the Grant is awarded, this Agreement shall terminate 30 days after Town's final payment to Telcom. If the Grant is not awarded, this Agreement shall terminate upon notice from the Commission that the Grant will not be awarded. If the Grant is not awarded, neither Party shall have any obligation to proceed with the Project or make any payment related to the Project. If the Grant is awarded in an amount less than requested in the Grant application, the Parties shall confer and determine the feasibility of proceeding with the Project.


11. Amendments. Any amendments to this Agreement must be in writing and signed by the Parties.

12. Entire Agreement. This Agreement, including its recitals and exhibits constitutes the entire agreement and understanding of the Parties with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement. There are no representations or understandings of any kind not stated in this Agreement.

13. Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

14. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts each of which shall be deemed an original but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

THE TOWN OF UNION:

By: 
Jennifer Meyer - Chairman

Date: 2-8-2022

24-7 TELCOM, INC:

By: 
Mark Stenseth - CEO

Date: 3/1/2022

EXHIBIT A

